

Co-Teachers Supporting Adolescent ELLs in Classrooms

by

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	3
Chapter 1: Introduction.....	4
Chapter 2: Literature Review.....	6
Chapter 3: Description of the Product & Tools.....	21
Chapter 4: Conclusion.....	27
References.....	33
Appendices.....	36
Appendix A: Google Forms.....	36
Appendix B: Co-Teaching Models.....	37
Appendix C: Helping ELLs Succeed.....	42
Appendix D: Weekly Planning.....	44
Appendix E: Reflection Logs.....	45
Appendix F: Jamboard.....	46
Appendix G: End of Year Evaluation.....	48
Appendix H: Exit Ticket.....	49
Appendix I: Professional Development Presentation Slides.....	50

Abstract

This project intends to support general education teachers, English Language Learner (ELL) teachers, and administration in addressing the achievement gap and facilitating the success of ELLs succeed in our schools. The ELL student population is expected to continue to grow in the United States, as are the demands for integrated strategies and methods within our classrooms. Educators are not adequately prepared to meet the increasing ELL population's needs, and administration is lacking proper support systems within their schools to address the needs of teachers and students. One of the most significance means of supporting ELLs is through co-teaching and co-planning approaches. In this project, a professional development seminar is designed to help teachers establish effective co-teaching and co-planning practices. Professional development also enforces that our administration understanding concepts outside of their field of expertise as well. These solutions will help to fulfill the needs of our ELLs as our teachers are able to exchange and implement ideas that can be used during instructional time. Furthermore, teachers will learn to reflect on strategies that did and did not work during instruction so that they may strengthen and adjust their lessons to meet the varying needs of our students.

Keywords: English Language Learners, co-teaching, co-planning, mainstream classroom, collaboration, professional development

Chapter 1: Introduction

With the gradual increase in the number of English Language Learners (ELLs) entering our school systems, it is crucial for all teachers to effectively meet the needs of our students. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (2023), the proportion of ELL students enrolled in public schools witnessed an increase from 9.2% in 2010 to 10.3% in 2020. Even with this increase in diverse students, many ELLs are not properly supported by the content teacher and ESL teacher. Whiting (2017) indicates that ELL teachers are not able to utilize their skills in general education classrooms as they are treated more as paraprofessionals that support the general education teacher rather than the students.

Further reasoning behind co-teaching struggles stem through the Common Core Standards Initiative, which raised expectations in literacy and placed considerable demands on educators to teach complex content to diverse learners without enough training (Peercy et al., 2017). Whiting (2017) explains that the extra stress with a lack of time for teachers to plan together made the work of the ELL teacher come across as ineffective. The lack of collaboration and support between the two professionals contributes to achievement gap between ELLs and their native English-speaking classmates (Li & Sun, 2023; Peercy et al., 2017; Villavicencio et al., 2021).

Our schools are failing to help every child because there is an achievement gap between ELLs and their peers. The achievement gap still exists because teachers have insufficient time to collaborate together, and planning with ELL teachers is not a priority (Whiting, 2017). A lack of collaboration negatively affects ELLs academic growth as they are not provided specific strategies and methods to assist in their development (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Li & Sun, 2023; Peercy et al., 2017). Examining and reflecting on collaborations between content teachers and

ESL teachers have shown that content teachers were unintentionally using exclusion practices that left out ELLs in lesson plans (Giles & Yazan, 2020).

However, teachers and students do not need to feel excluded when implementing the seven models of co-teaching. These seven models are not to be used all in one class but should vary based on objectives, and each class's needs. The seven models for co-teaching can be broken into 3 variations of teaching. The first three models utilize one group where the teachers role varies from leading, assessing, tandem and reinforcing. The second type of model breaks the classroom into two groups and the teachers assume various roles of tandem teaching, pre-teaching, reteaching and providing enriching information. The last model breaks the students into multiple groups and the teachers either facilitate lessons or monitor student learning (New York State Education Department, 2022).

Thus, this paper aims to provide teachers with useful co-planning and co-teaching strategies. Teachers will be provided with strategies that embrace frustrations and allow the co-teachers to grow into a natural successful unit. Additionally, this paper will explore further supports that administration can offer to help make this process effective for teachers and students.

In Chapter 2, I will review literature that discusses the negative effects from teachers not collaborating to build lesson. Findings will indicate the immediate need for a foundational framework within schools that can implement co-teaching and reinforce useful strategies that will help ELLs succeed academically. The literature review will be utilized to inform the design of professional development seminar in Chapter 3. The professional development will be delivered to all teachers and administration. It stresses the importance of administration supporting collaboration by providing schedules that offer collaborative frameworks.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This Chapter reviews literature that concerns co-teaching and co-planning of ELL teachers. There are many factors that affect ELL student success in the classroom including as achievement gaps, decreased graduation rates, and increased drop-out rates (e.g., Cardoza & Brown, 2019). These factors could be minimized if districts implemented better support systems for our ELLS. Co-planning and co-teaching are methods where general education teachers and ELL teachers collaborate to create lessons that eliminate marginalization and accentuate content and language needs that help all students to succeed.

As mentioned in Chapter 1, the negative impact of these factors on ELLs are a direct result of our school systems failing to meet the needs of our ELL students. There are four themes that emerged from the literature that explain how the school systems are failing to meet our ELLs needs. These four themes are isolation of ELL teachers, lack of collaboration between the general education teacher and the ELL teacher, depreciating cultural and linguistic differences in the classroom, and ineffective professional development (Cardoza & Brown, 2019; Giles & Yazan, 2020; Petróon et al., 2019; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Before discussing these deficits further, I will first present the theories of Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory, and Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory to illustrate how educators can support ELLs so that they may be successful in our schools.

Understanding Sociocultural Theory and Positioning Theory

Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory (SCT) and Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory are two theories that are going to explore the need for different teacher interactions with students and how teachers' roles affect student outcome. Vygotsky's (1978) SCT refers to individual learning that is deeply connected to social environments and interactions. SCT

supports the idea that ELLs are more likely to internalize and develop language best from different social interactions that can be found in differentiated classrooms (Alkhudiry, 2022; Dávila et al., 2017). These types of positive interactions help students to develop cognitive abilities and learning in the classroom that can even lead to more participation and social interactions (Giles & Yazan, 2020).

Co-teaching provides necessary varied instruction for all students particularly if teachers involve student groupings, or team-teaching methods (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Both the content and the language specialist teacher can use their knowledge and expertise to work together to meet the needs of their students through reflection and responsive team-teaching strategies (Percy et al., 2017). Furthermore, sociocultural theory supports collaborative teaching because the connection made internally through socializing with varying persons leads to stronger language development (Alkhudiry, 2022; Vygotsky, 1978). The more an ELL student interacts with different individuals the more they will develop their second language.

Positioning Theory (Davies and Harré, 1990) describes interactions between individuals and provides explanation as to the types of behaviors people exhibit while interacting. Particularly, reflexive and interactive positions can help to explain the roles of educators. According to Davies and Harré (1990), reflexive positions are when a person makes known their beliefs and views, and interactive positions are “how one person positions another, which can be mutual or contested” (Petrón et al., 2019, p. 3). This theory can help us to understand how teachers perceive their positions within the co-teaching experience as it unfolds their story (Petrón et al., 2019).

Positioning theory can help to construct the role a teacher plays in their co-teaching experience and how EL students are positioned within their schools. According to Villavicencio et al. (2021), despite many efforts students and teachers feel isolated and marginalized. ELL teachers often feel isolated and not valued (Petrón et al., 2019; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Similarly, ELL students often internalize their negative feelings as they are forced to fit into an English dominant language and school culture (Petrón et al., 2019; Villavicencio et al., 2021).

Both sociocultural theory and positioning theory have the constructs of socializing as a key factor in developing a better experience for students and teachers. Positioning theory fully supports Vygotsky's methodologies because it helps to fill in holes where different educators positions within group settings can support a learner. These theories can help me see the benefit of social interaction for ELLs and issues where group settings for students might not work for every student. Educators may not be able to position themselves to fill in the gaps for student achievement unless they are reflecting.

Challenges of Co-teaching and Co-planning

Isolation of ELL Teachers

Various research explains that much like ELL students, teachers of ELLs often feel isolated within their professions. In schools across America, teachers of ELLs have felt isolated because content teachers have treated them as secondary teachers. ELL teachers provide different methods and in teaching. These differences in pedagogical approaches make it difficult for mainstream teachers to respectfully recognize ELL educators as professionals (Petrón et al., 2019). One of the biggest challenges encountered by ELL teachers is acknowledgement of new methods and strategies that could benefit ELLs and their peers in the general education classroom.

This seclusion creates a rift for our ELL students' academic success as the general education teacher is not accepting inquiry into effective ELL instruction and information from their colleague (Villavicencio et al., 2021). Often the role of the ELL teacher becomes minimized because there is limited time within the workplace to plan and because the content is driven within our schools to not allow implementation of new methods (Giles & Yazan, 2020). ELL teachers' struggles with marginalization within their schools makes it difficult to successfully work together to share and implement effective approaches.

Teachers that are unwilling to share knowledge limit specialized teachers' roles in the classroom. In their mixed-method study of 28 schools in the United States known as the Internationals Network of Public Schools, Villavicencio et al. (2021) found traditional schools were not offering teachers effective time to plan together and that ELL teachers were often being used for information on students rather than being sought after to collaborate or build interdisciplinary curricula. To be clear, one of the least effective co-teaching approaches is to use another educator as an assistant rather than a partner (Peercy et al., 2016). Teachers that set up educational boundaries are severely isolating teachers and preventing both student and teacher growth.

Missing common planning time, and support from administration also greatly influences views of diversity and ELL teacher significance. A thriving and encapsulating classroom community is created when teachers can learn each other's content, discuss plans, and have common goals for all students (Jaffee, 2020). When ELL teachers are not utilized and valued in the general education classrooms, it can have a negative impact on student outcome because students will feel embarrassed and develop anxiety (Whiting, 2017). Students recognize when other teachers are viewed as insignificant. Petrón et al.'s (2019) study at Houston City School

found ELL teachers, all of which had completed their master's and had been teaching for at least five years, revealed that students felt isolated by their teachers, classmates, and school and that the same sentiments were also reciprocated with the ELL teachers. The study further found content teachers did not support diversity in school-facilitated community events, and ELL teacher's advocacy for such programs lack adequate support. Administration did little to provide opportunities for planning and collaboration. However, ELL teachers and general education teachers cannot truly co-teach together unless administration can support their educators in having definite routines (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Whiting, 2017).

It is important that ELL teachers' expertise is valued by their colleagues. Respect for each collaborating teachers' expertise is also a competent indicator of feeling included, and valued within school districts (Villavicencio et al., 2021). The challenges our ELLs are facing will not get better unless teachers are able to respect each other's educational backgrounds and expertise. Forcing teachers to work together despite conflicts of personalities and pedagogy can have adverse effects on teachers' abilities to work together. The lack of value placed on other teachers' expertise will create a nonreceptive relationship that will impact instruction negatively and will cause ELL teachers to lose their professional identity (Whiting, 2017). In their study at a high school in the southeast of the United States, Dávila et al. (2017) investigated three case studies involving experienced ELL and content teachers who had no prior experience in co-teaching. The study revealed that content teachers were unwilling to co-plan led ELL teachers feeling inferior and underprepared for classroom instruction. Ultimately trust was never built between the teachers, and this impacted student participation and willingness to learn greatly as they avoided answering questions or attempting the work (Dávila et al., 2017).

When creating teams of teachers, it is necessary to provide opportunity for teachers to build relationships and plan together (Bauler & Kang, 2020). In Dávila et al.'s (2017) study, teacher collaboration occurred in only one case study. Both teachers felt valued and had an effective approach to instruction in the classroom. All students in the classroom responded equally to each teacher because they both demonstrated respect for each other. Students demonstrated willingness to learn by enthusiastically participating in discussions and activities (Dávila et al., 2017).

When administration emphasizes the importance of co-teaching and makes it a priority it leaves an impact on the teachers. Teachers will see that the other teachers' experiences are equally important in creating an environment that harnesses successful learning outcomes for all students (Villavicencio et al., 2021). While collaboration might already exist in schools, the quality of the interaction should be purposeful, with a focus on developing interdisciplinary curricula and employing effective strategies for ELLs.

Lack of Teacher Collaboration

Another impediment to successful co-teaching is the lack of collaboration between teachers. Guided by the positioning theory, Giles and Yazan (2020) examined the perceptions of an ESL teacher and a general education teacher who co-taught two lessons to ESL students at a middle school in the southeastern United States. The general education teacher reported that prior to collaboration she had not simplified language or used language strategies. The general education teacher lacked knowledge and experience in planning lessons for ESL students. Both teachers negotiated the activities that students completed during the collaborative teaching lesson, and at the beginning the unequal division of responsibilities. The ESL teacher had to create the lesson on a topic that she was not familiar, so she had to familiarize herself and design a

lesson to include language and content objectives. Such an experience may create tensions as in Dang's (2017) study where four sets of teachers were paired together to co-teach for the first time. Findings revealed implementing collaboration between teachers resonated many feelings of tension as teachers struggled with a loss of power or independence.

However, over time co-teacher can leverage their positions and learn from each other. In Giles and Yazan's (2020) study, the general education teacher realized that "she needed to leverage her position as a lesson designer and instructional coach to verbalize the reason she included specific strategies in the lesson" (p. 7). Indeed, through joint instruction and planning, content and ELL teachers can improve their lessons so that they can truly enrich the learning of all students in their classrooms (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Whiting, 2017). For successful collaboration, it is vital for general classroom teachers and ELL teachers to have consistent and sufficient time to plan, and reflect (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Peercy et al., 2017). Consistent collaboration will support learning and implement enriching strategies that enhances students' comprehension (Jaffee, 2020). According to the sociocultural theory, a person's mental processing will only improve through communication and interaction with fellow (Alkhudiry, 2022).

It is known that integrating ELLs with mainstream students in group assignments can create a sense of belonging and equality (Whiting, 2017). This positive classroom environment helps ELLs to feel accepted which can harness increased academic achievement. When teachers work together, they can develop and enhance their own educational proficiencies. Nonetheless, without proper time management, planning, and communication, the quality of teaching can suffer significancy (Li & Sun, 2023). ESOL teachers play a crucial role in supporting mainstream classroom teachers by facilitating the integration of language, culture, and students'

experiences into daily lessons (Jaffee, 2020). These enriched lessons contribute to the creation of meaningful connections and strategies for engaging ELL students effectively, leading to more productive learning experiences. By incorporating language, culture, and experience into lessons, educators can create a learning environment that resonates with ELL students and enhances their engagement and learning outcomes

Depreciating Cultural and Linguistic Differences in Classrooms

Our classrooms are failing to provide cultural and linguistic curriculums. The lack of diversity and the full throttle support of English only classrooms will perpetually support existing prejudices (Petrón et al., 2019). The derisory cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom stems from a deficiency in strategies and tools provided to teacher candidates prior to entering the classroom (Li & Sun, 2023). Teachers are not making vital cultural and linguistic connections with students and are only creating a deeper achievement gap for ELLs. Cultural awareness and linguistic comprehension can create positive learning outcomes for students (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). Including culture and language will only help to inform students on deeper levels of understanding and make necessary academic connections.

Students, particularly ELLs, can make deeper connections with difficult concepts in curriculum by building on background knowledge. In a study conducted by Luevano and Collins (2020) second grade ESL students were given grade-level word problems paired with culturally relevant information, and their home language. Students were given pre and post assessments to determine baseline measures and learning acquired. It was proven that students had better post-test scores when the word problems were culturally and linguistically relevant (Luevano & Collins, 2020). During their three-year study in Long Island New York, Bauler and Kang (2020) used yearly interviews of ELL teachers and content teachers to study co-teaching and co-

planning success. These interviews indicated that cultural and linguistic resources were necessary for co-teaching to thrive and positively impact student achievement. The researchers further investigated students' prior knowledge and recognized that student backgrounds were critical assets to successful instruction (Bauler & Kang, 2020).

Implementing language and culture into daily instruction helps students gain confidence and motivation. Reducing barriers in ELL education will reduce the academic achievement gap that is currently plaguing our ELLs today (Luevano & Collins, 2020). Making personal connections to students will help students feel less isolated, and more valued. Connecting with students demonstrates a teacher's willingness to overlook prejudices that may linger in our communities while showing acceptance of all diverse students. Furthermore, this acceptance and willingness to learn about diverse backgrounds is one of the key pieces to constructing a welcoming and supportive classroom environment for ELLs and ELL teachers.

In addition to cultural and linguistic needs of the students, teachers need to feel confident in supporting culturally responsive instruction. Many teachers do not feel they are able to properly support ELLS in culturally responsive instruction. Malo-Juvera et al. (2018) conducted surveys and interviews at an elementary school in the Midwest. There were 26 participant teachers that volunteered to partake in this professional development. Teachers revealed that they felt challenged and lacked confidence in properly implementing culture in their curriculums (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018). Teacher beliefs that they cannot provide adequate instruction for ELL students contributes to the consistent achievement gap (Luevano & Collins, 2020). Teachers in the Malo-Juvera et al.'s (2018) study felt it was difficult to include culture and meet the learning standards into their everyday instruction.

This lack of confidence is a result of teachers not having enough training in implementing strategies for ELLs and districts not implementing enough professional development to educate personnel of cultural differences and similarities. Bauler and Kang (2020) further embrace co-teaching methods, especially collaboration and communication, as the best classroom option because of the ability for teachers to share their expertise in order the diverse needs of ELL students. Malo-Juvera et al. (2018) recommend that districts implement more culturally responsive trainings so that teachers can continue to grow as educators, but also because of the benefits of student learning, and sense of community it develops within our classrooms.

Ineffective Professional Development

There is a need for professional development in our school that will inform educators about English language strategies. Professional development can benefit our students and school when it is presented in a collaborative, and focused setting. Not only should teachers be present in these learning communities, but administration should also receive this professional development (Petrón et al., 2019). It is important for administration to be present because they can adjust schedules and make important changes that could support ELLs in their schools. Additionally, administrators need further education about methods and approaches when working with ELLs so that they can make informed decisions for implementing professional developments (Petrón et al., 2019).

When teachers are given time to create lessons together, they expand their ability and knowledge to provide positive professional support (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). A study presented by Percy et al. (2017) provides insight into a professional development that was created in order to allow collaboration between teachers who worked with ELL students. This

study took place at an elementary school and collected data through the use of study groups, classroom observations, debriefings, and interviews (Peercy et al., 2017).

Over the course of a year, ELA and ELL teachers were guided through implementing a new ELA curriculum. The beginning of the implementation was a battle; however, the significance of the teachers working together demonstrated teacher growth through communication and interaction (Peercy et al., 2017). Despite the negative associations with implementing new material, teachers expanded cross-content knowledge through their social interactions with ELL colleagues. When ideas are externally communicated between ELL teachers and content teachers it creates learning opportunities and professional growth (Peercy et al., 2017). Teachers that share information, are better able to align curriculum standards and student learning needs so that effective lessons are created (Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). Teaching and planning together can be a challenge, but these challenges result in professionals communicating with one another. Professional development can eliminate innate biases, promote reflection, develop cultural understanding, and build best practices (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018). Communication between professionals develops deeper understandings of content and strategies that can best meet the needs of ELL students in our classrooms.

Many teachers have a basic understanding of the skills needed to work with ELL. They do not have the background knowledge or an artillery of strategies necessary to help ELLs. Li and Peters (2016) signified during their research that professional development is a needed training for all educators because most do not have specialized schooling in instructing ELLs. Due to a lack of competency in working with ELL students, ELLs are not being serviced as equals within their general education classrooms. The study examined K-12 teachers in a southern low-performance school over the course of 10 months (Li & Peters, 2016). Data was

collected through surveys, monthly teacher reflections, observations, and student writing samples. According to Li and Peters (2016), researchers would train the K-12 teachers on specific ELL strategies, then allow fellow ELL teachers to observe these teachers using the newly learned ELL strategies.

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Teachers can improve instruction for ELLs by actively planning together, sharing pedagogy, and sharing expertise. Data from this study indicated that professional developments that are backed scientifically, and that focus on ELLs will increase teacher understanding of strategies they can use with ELL students. This results in teachers expanding their personal knowledge (Li & Peters, 2016). Professional developments that failed the teachers were mentioned in the study by Villavicencio et al. (2021). Of the two schools in the study, one of the schools monthly professional developments were administrator led and lecture based. Villavicencio et al. (2021) identified this type of professional learning as ineffective because it

lacked socialization between cohorts. The best strategy for successful professional development is when all staff can be trained by external professionals that utilize collaboration to build understanding and trust.

It is imperative that professional development for co-planning and co-teaching is a continuing process. Teacher communication, and teacher reflection of strategies should be utilized in daily and weekly lessons with periodic meet ups throughout the year to discuss the successes and challenges (Giles & Yazan, 2020; Li & Peters, 2016; Li & Sun, 2023; Peercy et al., 2017). Therefore, teachers should be provided ample time to partake in the processes of collaboration, debriefing and reflecting. Cardoza and Brown (2019) conducted a study in an elementary school to determine if dual language instruction could help newcomer ELLs in fourth and fifth grade mathematics. Students were hand selected based on specific criteria such as economic status, proficiency level, language background, and academic performance. All teachers partaking in the study were provided weekly professional learning groups, and periodical professional development over a 6-month period of time (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). It is vital for introduced strategies and methods to be reinforced throughout a school year and that teachers are given time to practice each new approach in their classrooms. This can allow teachers to reflect and make modifications where necessary for future attempts at using these strategies for ELLs.

Students were tested using the I-Ready program at the beginning of the year, and then periodically throughout the year until March (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). Results were then compared with previous fourth and fifth grade scores over the last 3 years. During the previous 3 years all ELL students were a part of the pull-out method. The pull-out method is not a preferred method because it often makes ELLs feel as if they don't belong (Li & Sun, 2023). ELL teachers

similarly feel disconnected because teachers didn't have common goals during their separate instruction time (Peercy et al., 2017).

Meanwhile, during this current study, content teachers used an inclusive approach by incorporating language and culture into their lessons (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). The findings indicated that teachers that could bridge cultural and language gaps could have a positive impact on student performance (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). Educators that create material that incorporates culture and language of ELLs into their curriculum will improve student performance (Luevano & Collins, 2020). Furthermore, the findings clearly indicated that professional development that is focused on ELLs, culture, and strategies should be mandatory for classroom teachers (Cardoza & Brown, 2019). All teachers should be informed of the uniquely diverse backgrounds and needs of students in their building. For this reason Cardoza and Brown (2019) indicate that public school would benefit from professional development as it can challenge educational biases in our classrooms that support monolingualism and deculturalization.

Summary

Co-teaching and co-planning have been positively linked with promoting ELL standards of achievement and improving language proficiency levels. Research has proven the multitude of benefits that co-teaching methods and approaches can have for students and teachers in our schools. However, there are still many teachers that do not understand how to implement co-teaching methods (Peercy et al., 2017). Without preparation of these methods, teachers may not recognize the different roles they can play during instruction. Furthermore, training can help to inform collaborating teachers of the equal roles they should be portraying in the classroom.

Part of the failures in the classroom are due to our school districts and administrations lack of support. Teachers need support from administration because they need to be given time to collaborate, learn and reflect together so that biases, and professional isolation can be eliminated (Malo-Juvera et al., 2018; Petróon et al., 2019). Administration can also provide more opportunity for professional development to learn strategies, collaborate and grow as a unit. These opportunities will help our ELL students to succeed and close the achievement gap.

The literature reviewed has brought deeper clarity as to the needs of ELL teachers and general classroom teachers so that they may provide the best support for English Language Learners in their classrooms. Co-planning teachers need to have equal roles and should be able to share strategies and ideas to create lessons that meet the standards and needs of ELLs. The literature depicted that these needs require direct support from school administration and districts. The types of support necessary to reduce the achievement gap of English Language Learners is providing time for both content and ELL teachers to plan, instruct and reflect together.

Administration would also benefit from ensuring that ELL teachers are utilized for their expertise in regard to professional development plans and various other school wide decisions. In Chapter 3, I will describe my professional development plan to provide strategies for co-planning and co-teaching. The professional development plan will inform content teachers, ELL teachers and administration about different methods and approaches to use throughout the school year.

Chapter 3: Description of the Product and Tools

In this Chapter I will describe a professional development plan designed to help general education teachers, and ELL teachers to co-plan and co-teach with the support of their administration at the Western New York Maritime Charter School district. The problem facing the Maritime Charter School district is an absence of co-planning and co-teaching because of insufficient support, understanding and leadership regarding these methods. Many teachers are not prepared to support students with varying backgrounds like English Language Learners (ELLs) in their classrooms as they lack the experience and are not prepared for co-teaching situations (Dávila et al., 2017; Giles & Yazan, 2020). This issue has clearly indicated that there are many flaws in our educational system in supporting the needs of diverse learners. Co-teaching is an essential component to service the many needs of ELLs (Bauler & Kang, 2020). The products and tools offered were chosen based on deficiencies within our educational systems that need immediate support and implementation in our schools.

Description of Professional Development

The professional development plan will be presented to faculty at Western New York Maritime Charter School district. The professional development will focus on the middle and high school teachers and administrators. This district has 468 students with 82% of students receiving free and reduced lunches. 184 students are Hispanic, 36 are enrolled as ELLs with the primary home language as Spanish. There is one ELL teacher for the middle school and 2 ELL teachers at the high school that primarily push into classrooms. Like many of the schools mentioned in the literature review of Chapter 2, our ELL and general education teachers are not provided proper planning time often times forcing the ELL teacher to be seen as a secondary teacher (Giles & Yazan, 2020). The ELL teachers play dual roles as the ELL teacher and the

foreign language teacher. Leaving the ELL teacher limited time to work with students one on one and only time to push in with students. The ELL teachers will primarily push into the Math and ELA classrooms. Being that the ELL teacher cannot push into other core classes with their students, this professional development aims to educate all general education teachers, administration, and ELLS with understanding the importance of co-teaching and co-planning and how to integrate these methods in the school district.

Co-teaching and Co-planning are a method that takes time to develop and requires teachers to reflect. Reflection is a valuable tool to help teachers understand strategies that did and didn't work as well (Dang, 2017; Li & Peters, 2016). With this acknowledgement, this professional development will occur again in the middle of the year and the end of the year.

Agenda for Professional Development

The professional development will take place throughout the school year in three different sessions that are an hour long. The first session will take place during the summer faculty meeting August 29, 2023, with the next two taking place in the middle and the end of the school year. The first professional development will provide the attendees with information about co-teaching and co-planning as well as strategies that can help diverse learners in general education classrooms. Teachers will then be provided time to set weekly goals and create schedules to plans as these are important for collaboration (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Gallo-Fox & Scantlebury, 2015). The first professional development hopes to enlighten general education teacher, administration, and ELL teachers the importance or working together in having common goals (Li & Sun, 2023). The first professional development will provide a slideshow and handouts for all teachers to access.

The first part of their hour-long summer session will begin with a google form (see appendix A). The google form is meant to provide insight into what they know already. After the google form is completed, attendees will be provided with 7 different types of co-teaching strategies (appendix B). The teachers will work in groups of 3-4 to determine advantages and struggles of each method. They will be informed that often more than one model is used during a lesson, and they will be provided with the challenges and advantages of each model upon their group collaboration.

Next, we will examine different ways in which we as educators can help our ELLs succeed (See appendix C). Fairbairn and Jones-Vo (2019) indicate that educators can create an atmosphere that promotes informative insight and skills when teachers can combine expertise and work together. They also further state that it is mandatory for all teachers to adjust their lessons and assessments to meet the needs of diverse students. Through meaningful collaboration teachers will guarantee their lessons will positively impact ELLs. With this insight, the professional development will explore ways in which they can guide ELLs to success in their classrooms. Luevano and Collins (2020) suggest that schema instruction, modeling and vocabulary instruction are important in helping ELLs succeed, furthermore that vocabulary is important to teach as many words have multiple meanings across different content areas.

All attendees will be given a weekly planning schedule to help them co-plan their weekly lessons(see appendix D). This was made with the idea that despite all perfect scenarios educators run out of time quite often. Educators need the full support of administration by allowing the implementation of co-teaching, revising guidelines for ELLs, and providing adequate time for co-planning (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Li & Sun, 2023). After presenting the weekly planning material, teachers will be provided with a paper copy of daily reflection journal (see appendix E)

that they will be asked to fill out until the next professional development. This will be available on their google drive for educators to make a copy of and use daily. They will also have the option to print the reflection log and keep a paper-based running record too.

The following professional development will take place after the winter break during the first faculty meeting of the new year. During this session, ELL teachers and general classroom teachers with ELLs will be the main focus. The faculty meeting will take place afterschool and run for 30 minutes. Teachers will begin the meeting by logging into their google accounts and accessing Jamboard (see appendix F). Here they will anonymously answer three questions that are meant to evaluate the challenges and strengths of co-teaching. After all teachers have posted in Jamboard there will be a whole group discussion. After the whole group discussion teachers will break off into grade levels and discuss solutions to struggles faced with co-planning and co-teaching. Teachers in each group will create a list of solutions for 5 minutes. After the 5 minutes, all teachers will share in as a whole group their solutions. Solutions to obstacles in teaching can open doors for teachers to find new strategies that will help them work through roadblocks. All struggles and solutions will be shared with the administration of the district so that policy makers can revise and allot for successful co-planning in their classrooms.

The last professional development will take place during the first faculty meeting of June. During this meeting teachers will be able to make suggestions on what they need in order to continue to feel successful in co-teaching as well as supported (see appendix G). Teachers will work in groups to reflect on their experiences. Each group will discuss their answers with the whole class. To end the professional development, teachers will fill out an exit slip (see appendix F) that asks them to provide one of their favorite moments of co-teaching this year. This will

allow teachers to reflect on a success or positive moment that they had this year despite some of the struggles they may have faced.

Rationale for Materials

As per the literature reviewed in Chapter 2, research suggests that professional development regarding co-teaching our ELLs should take place over an extended period of time. Ongoing professional development will allow coworkers to constructively collaborate together in the classroom (Li & Sun, 2023; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Villavicencio et al. (2021) discuss the importance of having consistent meaningful professional development. The researchers were able to conclude that over the course of three years schools with inconsistent leadership and professional developments were less successful in co-teaching as they were not able to follow the line of leadership and feel supported (Villavicencio et al., 2021). Ultimately, this professional development took the literatures successes into consideration by providing teachers and administration with information and resources that would help them succeed throughout the year. Further, the following two professional developments were more collaborative and reflective as we analyzed failures and achievements throughout this process. All failures, and solutions were reported back to administration so that policymakers could develop supporting revisions to or resolve any conflicts that hinder teacher collaboration. Analyzing was guided through group work and whole class discussions because learning takes place during social interactions (Alkhudiry, 2022). All google forms created helped the professional development to adjust information and acquiring prior and learned knowledge.

Summary

Western New York Maritime Charter School lacks understanding of how to implement co-teaching and co-planning strategies to help ELLs succeed in their district. This professional

development aims at educating all personnel that interact with ELLs in the district on how to properly collaborate to create comprehensive and inclusive lessons. The participants will understand struggles and will discuss solutions to help grow the development of co-teaching and co-planning in the district. The length of the professional development will encourage all parties associated with ELLs to continue to learn from each other and take on roles that aren't meant to isolate but elevate educational learning in our schools.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

There has been a steady influx of ELLs entering our school systems over the last two decades, and they are expected to continue to grow (Li & Peters, 2016; Whiting, 2017). ELL teacher and general classroom collaboration is an effective method that should be used to continue to help our ELLs within our schools. However, this collaboration known as co-teaching and co-planning is not being used consistently in our schools. The superficial collaboration in our classrooms is producing an achievement gap that does not offer equal opportunity for our ELL students to succeed in our school systems (Villavicencio et al., 2021). The project examined the importance of reflection and communication between educators to help provide better lessons for ELL learning. Additionally, Vygotsky's (1978) sociocultural theory and Davies and Harré's (1990) positioning theory were two theories that were evaluated in understanding the importance of teacher and student interactions during learning and language acquisition.

Lastly, to implement the co-teaching models into daily lessons, it is necessary to understand the challenges that teachers and students will face. These factors include, a lack of time, a lack of cultural and linguistic acceptance and understanding, and unequal or unclear teacher roles. These factors were considered in this project as barriers to successful co-planning and teaching that need to be fixed in order to better help our students.

Summary

I have reviewed various sources of literature on the topic of co-planning and co-teaching. These studies included research on ELL teachers struggles with being treated as paraprofessionals (Petrón et al., 2019; Villavicencio et al., 2021), ELL and content teachers struggles with collaboration (Giles & Yazan, 2020), depreciating cultural and linguistic differences in classrooms (Bauler & Kang, 2020; Luevano & Collins, 2020; Malo-Juvera et al.,

2018), and ineffective professional development (Cardoza & Brown, 2019; Li & Peters, 2016; Peercy et al., 2017; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Based on the research, I was able to formulate some important factors that are needed to implement and maintain successful co-teaching and co-planning methods. These are factors that answer my initial drive behind this capstone and that was how to support and improve co-planning and co-teaching within our schools.

The literature in relation to my research questions served to direct me to several conclusions for supporting and improving co-planning and co-teaching approaches in our school. The first implication suggested the importance of communication when using co-planning models. Communication came in several forms like respecting the expertise of the other teacher and communicating reflections before and after lesson planning. To develop stronger co-teaching and co-planning in our schools it is important for communication to continue in the form of reflection before and after lessons (Dávila et al., 2017; Giles & Yazan, 2020; Peercy et al., 2017). Teachers should evaluate methods and strategies that they struggled with as well as what worked for their students. Reflecting on the struggles of our classroom lesson and strategy application allows teachers to grow professionally by realizing how to make lessons more effective for students in future plans.

Another key to co-planning and co-teaching is the importance of providing time for collaboration and reflection. Staff need to be able to meet daily, if not weekly to discuss and create their plans for instruction (Whiting, 2017). Teachers that receive common planning time can ensure that they are using effective ELL strategies, implementing cultural and linguistic instruction, and can synchronizing content and language objectives in lessons (Giles & Yazan, 2020). Common planning time will allow teachers time to create enriching lessons that can equally meet the needs of English Language Learners. Many general education teachers are not

informed of how to provide culturally responsive instruction in their lesson. ELL teachers can provide content teachers with various strategies on how to incorporate the home language and diverse cultures of ELL students into lessons when they are provided time to collaborate. It was clearly established that providing culture and language into daily lessons engages ELL student performance and makes them feel welcomed.

Lastly, it was evident that teachers, and administration need professional development as neither have had explicit training in working with ELLs. Due to a lack of knowledge in understanding ELLs there are gaps in instruction and in knowledge on how to best support ELLs in our schools. Administration should know the difficulties teachers will face when co-planning and co-teaching and recognize that they can best support them by giving them time (Percy et al., 2017). Furthermore, administration can reach out to ELL teachers and others in the field to optimize trainings that provide information on diverse backgrounds, and strategies to help ELL students.

This literature reviewed on co-planning and co-teaching guided the professional development and tools that were created for Western New York Maritime Charter Schools. The professional development will provide content teachers and ELL teachers information on co-teaching and co-planning. Administration will also be informed of how to best support their teachers during the year. The professional development has several implications for both the students and the teacher at Western New York Maritime Charter School district.

Implication for Student Learning

Co-teaching and co-planning strategies will produce positive outcomes for ELL students when implemented into mainstream classrooms. Research reveals that the more social interaction provided within the classroom will result in deeper understanding and more participation (Giles

and Yazan). Additionally, Bauler and Kang (2020) describe students having improved language proficiency because of co-teaching methods. ELL students will have increased learning outcomes when teachers can effectively construct lessons together that focus on language and content objectives. These lessons will continue to improve student performance by incorporating varying co-teaching models and ELL strategies.

Co-planning and co-teaching can meet the language needs of ELL students when teachers are able to work together to create carefully aligned instruction. Connecting language objectives will improve student needs as well as incorporating culture and language will engage students. These connections to ELLs backgrounds create a welcoming environment that can help to motivate students and increase participation (Dávila et al., 2017; Giles & Yazan, 2020).

Lastly, students will have a sense of belonging through the use of co-teaching in the general education classrooms. Implementing strategies that involve partner sharing, and group collaboration will provide ELLs with opportunities to socialize and work with their peers that are not ELL students too. Whiting (2017) describes that when students are pulled out of the classroom, they feel isolated and embarrassed. These types of feelings caused by the pull-out method can negatively impact students by discouraging them and making them feel less motivated (Li & Sun, 2023). Co-teaching is inclusive and provides opportunities for students to extend their learning, and social interactions with their classmates. ELLs will have a stronger sense of belonging and acceptance.

Implications for Teaching

Teachers will greatly benefit from utilizing co-teaching and co-planning approaches within their classrooms. The first concept that teachers will profit from is the ability to learn new strategies that can specifically be used with ELL students. Most teachers are not prepared for the

increased ELL population in our schools and are not educated in ELL training (Li & Peters, 2016; Villavicencio et al., 2021). This means that many teachers will benefit from collaborating with experts in the field of ELL education as they will develop deeper levels of cultural understanding and they will acquire guidance in effective ELL strategies.

Teachers will also learn that through stress and common challenges in our daily instruction there can also be growth and even greater success. Teachers will discover that perseverance is possible with positive outcomes by collaborating with their peers. They will be able to understand through the professional development that there are going to be hurdles that come with co-teaching and co-planning. However, the art of reflection will greatly reduce the amount of repeat failures and frustrations when working through co-teaching methods and strategies in classrooms.

The professional development provided will also allow teachers to successfully consider solutions to problems as well as reinforce key concepts about co-teaching. Often times teachers get busy during the school year, having the professional development in three-parts allows educators time to work through implementing new concepts. It also permits teachers to feel supported and more structured so that co-teaching and co-planning are successful (Villavicencio et al., 2021). This professional development and the administration providing planning time will benefit teachers as they will be able to improve their instruction and their understanding of the needs of ELL students.

Recommendations for Future Research

The research found in the literature review provided a lot of insight about co-teaching and co-planning in our schools. Most research implied that teachers did not feel there was enough time in the day to collaborate with the specialists. More research could evaluate the success of

co-teaching in a school that creates less demands on their teachers. At Western New York Maritime Charter Schools, the ELL teacher is also the foreign language teacher which creates a very busy schedule for any teacher. This means that the ELL teacher cannot be in the core classes of all the ELL students and has to find time after school and during lunches to meet the needs of the remaining ELLs in the building. There was also a lack of research on small districts similar to Western New York Maritime whose teachers wear many hats and are often short staffed. For Western New York Maritime, the professional development will be a great start to creating a more cohesive and fluid atmosphere for teach collaboration. However, schools similar to this need to relinquish some of the demands on the teachers in order for co-teaching to thrive.

Final Thoughts

The ELL population is expected to continue to increase by 2025, and yet many teachers are not prepared to meet the needs of such diverse students (Peercy et al., 2017; Villavicencio et al., 2021). Contributions to these struggles are the teachers lack of cultural and linguistic inclusion in their lessons, the lack of resources and time available, and isolation of ELL experts. These factors can certainly contribute to the achievement gap our ELL students are facing. Co-teaching and co-planning can have a positive impact on ELL student achievement levels in our education system as it can help to expand teacher capabilities in providing an equal education for English Language Learners.

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Appendix A

Google Forms

Appendix A - Co-teaching for ELLs

Form description

What does co-teaching mean to you?

Long answer text

Do you co-plan and co-teach currently?

Long answer text

What are some struggles of co-teaching and co-planning?

Long answer text

What are the benefits of co-teaching and co-planning?

Long answer text

What are important skills you need to co-teach?

Long answer text

What is culturally responsive teaching?

Short answer text

Have you taken a course or professional development about teaching students from diverse backgrounds?

Long answer text

Do you feel like you have adequate knowledge on how to successfully teach English Language Learners in your classroom?

Long answer text

Appendix B

Co-teaching Models

The following co-teaching models can be found in more detail at New York State Department of Education under “Seven Models of Co-Teaching”. You will break into groups of 3-4 and list advantages and challenges of each model.

Whole Group Models

1: Teacher Leads, Teacher “Purposefully Teaches”

The lead teacher introduces new information, a new skill or models a new strategy. The second teacher interacts with all students to help clarify information, instructions, or to scaffold.

Teachers should alternate roles so that each teacher has an opportunity to lead instruction and are viewed as equals. Or teachers can switch teaching roles after a certain amount of time.

This method can be used to introduce new information or demonstrating reading strategies.

Advantages:

Challenges:

2: Two Teach the Same Content

Both co-teachers share time teaching content working off of each other. While one may teach the other offers different strategies, introduces any technology, and provides L1 support.

This method allows each teacher to use their strengths to execute lessons that support student learning.

Advantages:

Challenges:

3: One teaches, One Assesses

One teacher leads a lesson, and the other teacher evaluates students. The teacher assessing can use a rubric or checklist and may evaluate certain students for linguistic purposes or may evaluate for overall student performances.

In this model, anecdotal records are often used to help assess prior knowledge.

Advantages:

Challenges:

Two Group Models

Model 4: Two Groups: Two Teach the Same Content

This model divides the class in two equal groups and allows the teachers to teach the same lessons to a smaller class size. Groups can be divided by skill or language proficiency. Teachers will teach the same lesson but may use different resources that could benefit the group of students in front of them.

This method is helpful in differentiating instruction using different methods for the same concept.

Advantages:

Challenges:

Model 5: Two Groups: One Pre-Teaches, One Teaches Alternative Information

Students are grouped based on their performance in class not proficiency levels. The Pre-Teaching teacher will focus on building important knowledge that students (ELL's) may need to help understand the concept(s). The other teacher is enriching students on the concept(s) to help expand understanding. The groups are eventually combined to discover more details about the content of the lesson together.

This model is great for introducing graphic organizers that can be used for the main lesson.

Advantages:

Challenges:

Model 6: One Reteaches, One Teaches Alternative Information

Similar to model 5, students are placed into groups based on skill not English proficiency.

However, one teacher is reviewing already learned content and the other teacher is enriching . It allows ELLS time to strengthen their understanding and skills that will improve their overall learning.

This models purpose is often recognized for interventions after recognizing students' needs through formative assessment.

Advantages:

Challenges:

Multiple Groups Model

Model 7: Two Monitor and Teach

During this model teachers circulate the room to offer support and oversee learning taking place or teachers may remain in one place and provide mini lessons. Students are in flexible groups, and they rotate through stations.

This model, as mentioned is great for stations , centers and guided reading/writing. It allows for students to have an interactive and hands-on approach to learning.

Advantages:

Challenges:

Appendix C

Helping ELLs Succeed

Think-pair-share the following questions:

What does it mean to be culturally responsive?

How can we as teachers help ELL students succeed in our schools apart from using strategies?

Strategies

Building Background

Allow students to share information using their home language (L1)

KWL Charts

Graphic Organizers

Table of Content Prediction

Drawing or writing in L1 to share prior knowledge.

Be culturally aware

Building Vocabulary

Frayer Model

List-Group-Label

Word Sorts

Building Comprehension

Close reading

Give extra time

Visual aids

Group work

Sentence Frames/starters

Class discussions

Appendix D
Weekly Planning

Co-Teaching Weekly Planning

	Objectives	Co-teaching Model(s)	Activities	Accommodations	Evaluations & Assessments	Teacher Responsibilities
Monday	Content					
	Language					
Tuesday	Content					
	Language					
Wednesday	Content					
	Language					
Thursday	Content					
	Language					
Friday	Content					
	Language					

Appendix E

Self-Reflection Planning Logs

Self-Reflection Planning Logs

Date: _____

What worked well during the collaboration?

What was a challenge during the collaboration?

Self-Reflection Log for Post Instruction

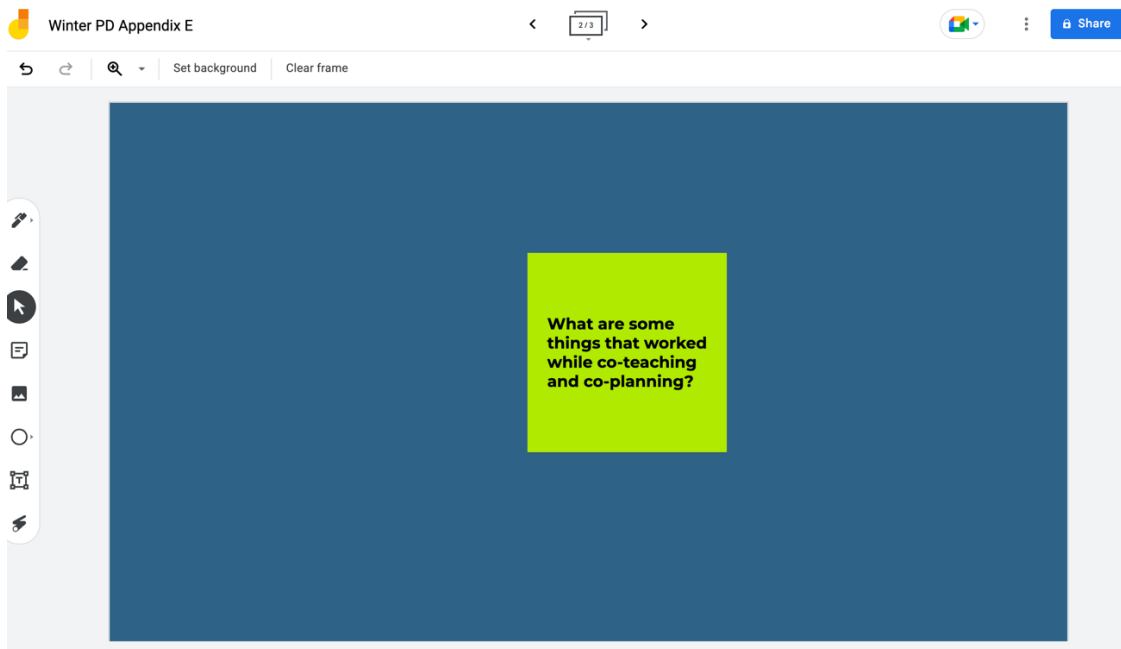
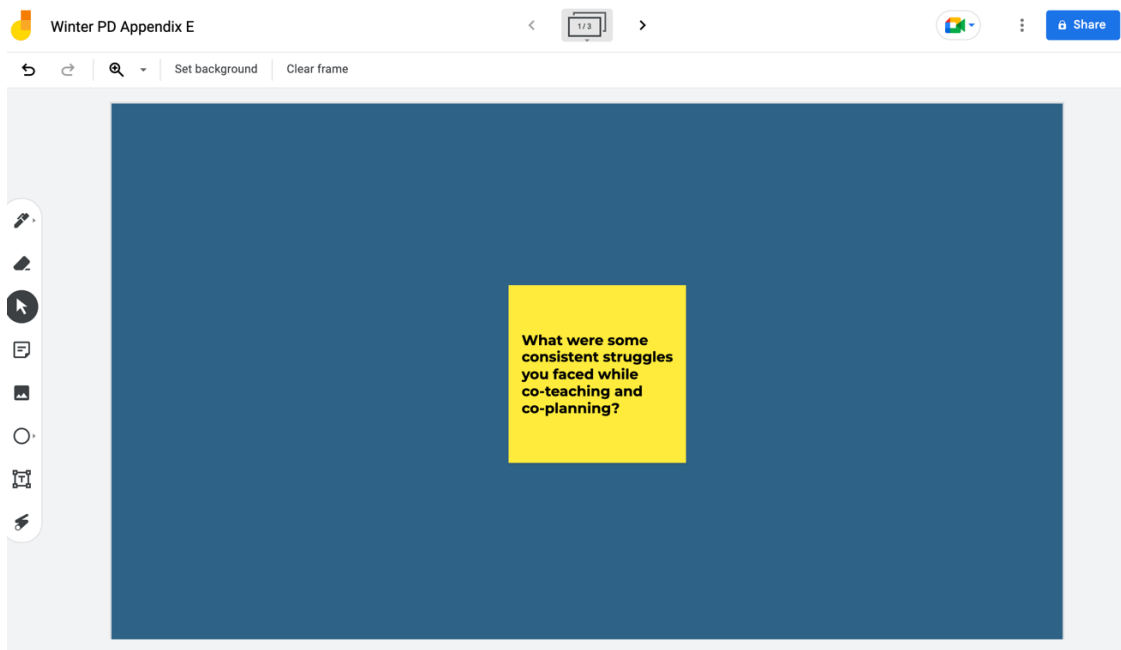
Date: _____

What worked during the lesson?

What needed improvement during the lesson?

Appendix F

Jamboard



Winter PD Appendix E

< 3/3 >

Share

Set background Clear frame

Were you able to regularly co-plan together ? Why or Why not?

The image shows a digital workspace interface. At the top, there is a title bar with "Winter PD Appendix E" on the left, navigation arrows and a "3/3" indicator in the center, and a "Share" button on the right. Below the title bar is a toolbar with icons for undo, redo, search, and options to "Set background" and "Clear frame". The main area is a large blue rectangle. In the center of this rectangle is a smaller, light blue text box containing the question: "Were you able to regularly co-plan together ? Why or Why not?". On the left side of the blue rectangle, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for drawing tools like a pencil, eraser, lasso, and selection tools.

Appendix G

End of Year Evaluation

In groups of 3-4 discuss what you as educators need to continue to feel supported and successful in co-teaching and co-planning for next year?

Appendix H**Exit Ticket**

Describe your favorite memory from co-teaching this year?

Exit Ticket

Please answer the following question on the Exit Slip provided:

Describe your favorite memory from co-teaching this year?

Appendix I

Professional Development Presentation

<https://tinyurl.com/mwqx5tw3>